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Colonel Hawari and His Terrorist Apparatus

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A Research Paper

Approved for Release
Date JUN 1999

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October 1988

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Colonel Hawari and His Terrorist Apparatus [REDACTED]

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A Research Paper

This paper was prepared by [REDACTED]
Office of Global Issues. Comments and queries are
welcome and may be directed to the Chief,
[REDACTED] Counterterrorist
Center, [REDACTED]

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Colonel Hawari and His
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Colonel Hawari and His
Terrorist Apparatus

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Summary

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Senior Fatah security official Colonel Hawari heads a special operations group that has orchestrated terrorist operations in Western Europe, the Middle East, and Asia, and poses a continuing threat worldwide, particularly to the personnel and facilities of adversaries of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), as well as to US interests.

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A confidant of PLO Chairman Yasir Arafat, Hawari has built his terrorist apparatus using his wide access to Fatah and other resources:

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Hawari has also extended his activities into Lebanon, serving as a Fatah liaison to the pro-Iranian Hizballah organization.

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Hawari's terrorist attacks have generally gone unclaimed or have been claimed by previously unknown groups not associated with the PLO.

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Hawari's strength depends on his Fatah affiliation and his personal ties to Arafat—which we believe are firm. These credentials make unilateral action against Hawari politically difficult for those nations that support the PLO.

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The geographic extent of Hawari's operational presence has its downside, however. Decentralization has complicated logistics and increased vulnerability to exposure.

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Although it is unlikely that diplomatic pressure or security service successes could put Hawari out of business, these countermeasures can keep him off balance and thereby limit his effectiveness.

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Colonel Hawari and His Terrorist Apparatus b (3)

Introduction

Palestinian security official Colonel Hawari ('Abdullah 'Abd al-Hamid Labib) heads a Fatah special operations group that poses a continuing threat to the personnel and facilities of adversaries of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) worldwide and to US interests. Hawari now directs a global terrorist apparatus with sophisticated technical capabilities.

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Hawari's special operations group—an integral element of Yasir Arafat's Fatah organization—has been active in terrorist attacks since the mid-1980s, particularly against Syrian targets. The apparatus has orchestrated terrorist operations in Western Europe, the Middle East, and Asia—the PLO's 1974 "ban" on international terrorism notwithstanding. We believe the Hawari apparatus undertook anti-US terrorist operations over the late 1985 to mid-1986 period, including the bombing of TWA Flight 840 in April 1986 that killed four US citizens.

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Development of Hawari's Network

Hawari joined Fatah in the 1970s and has moved up within its ranks to a senior security position, owing in part to his close relationship with the PLO Chairman.

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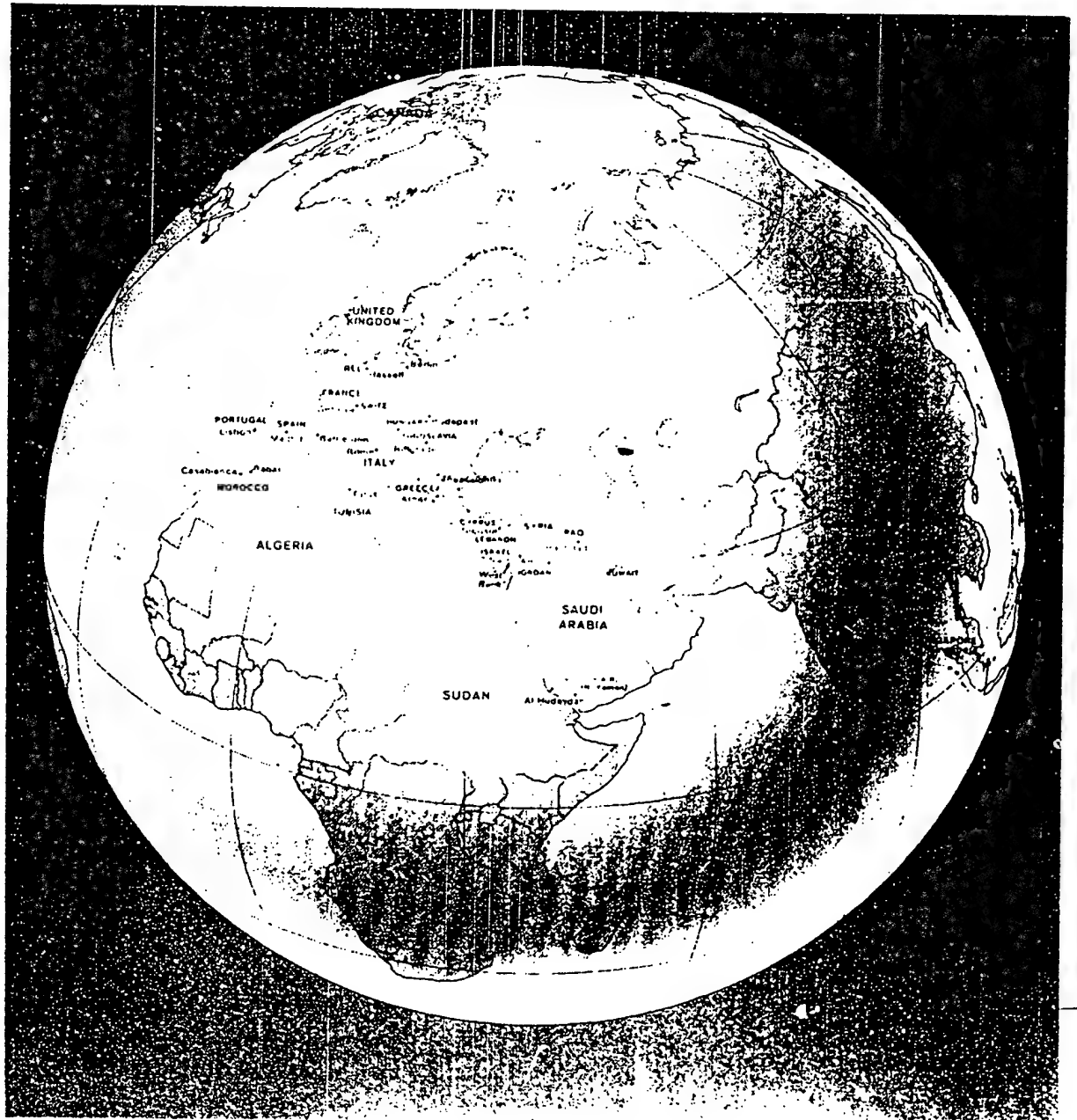
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Hawari's Terrorist Activities



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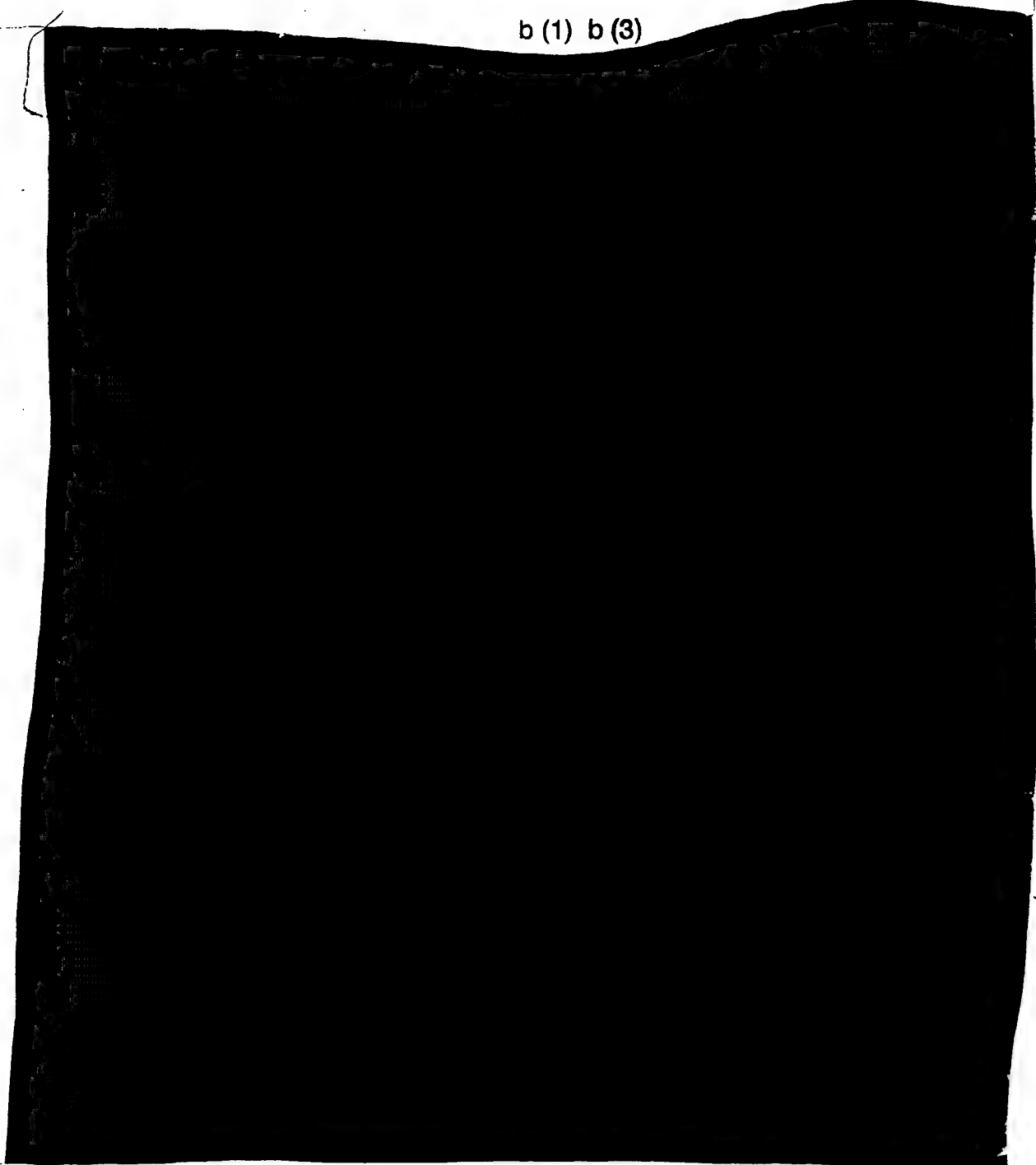
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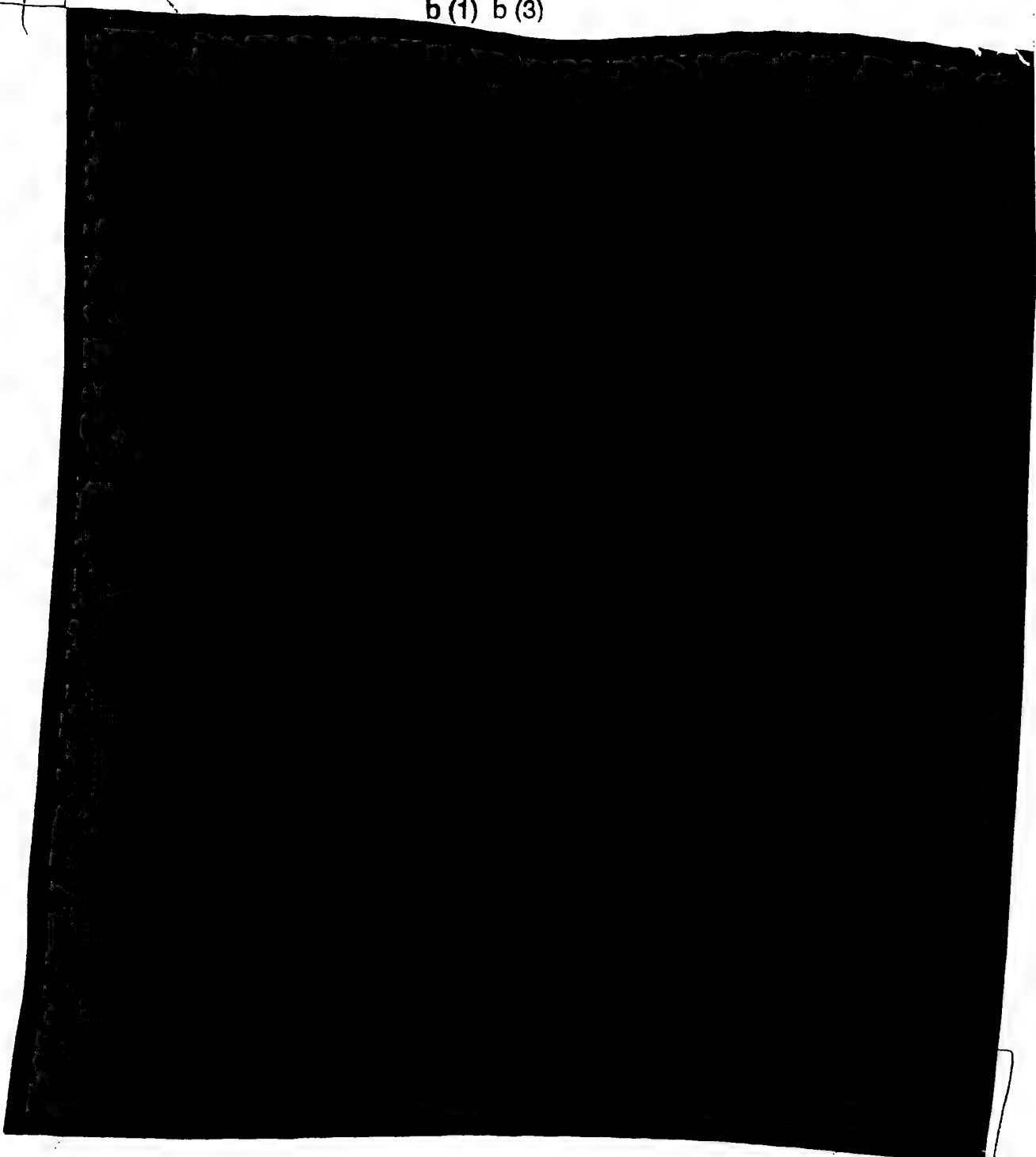
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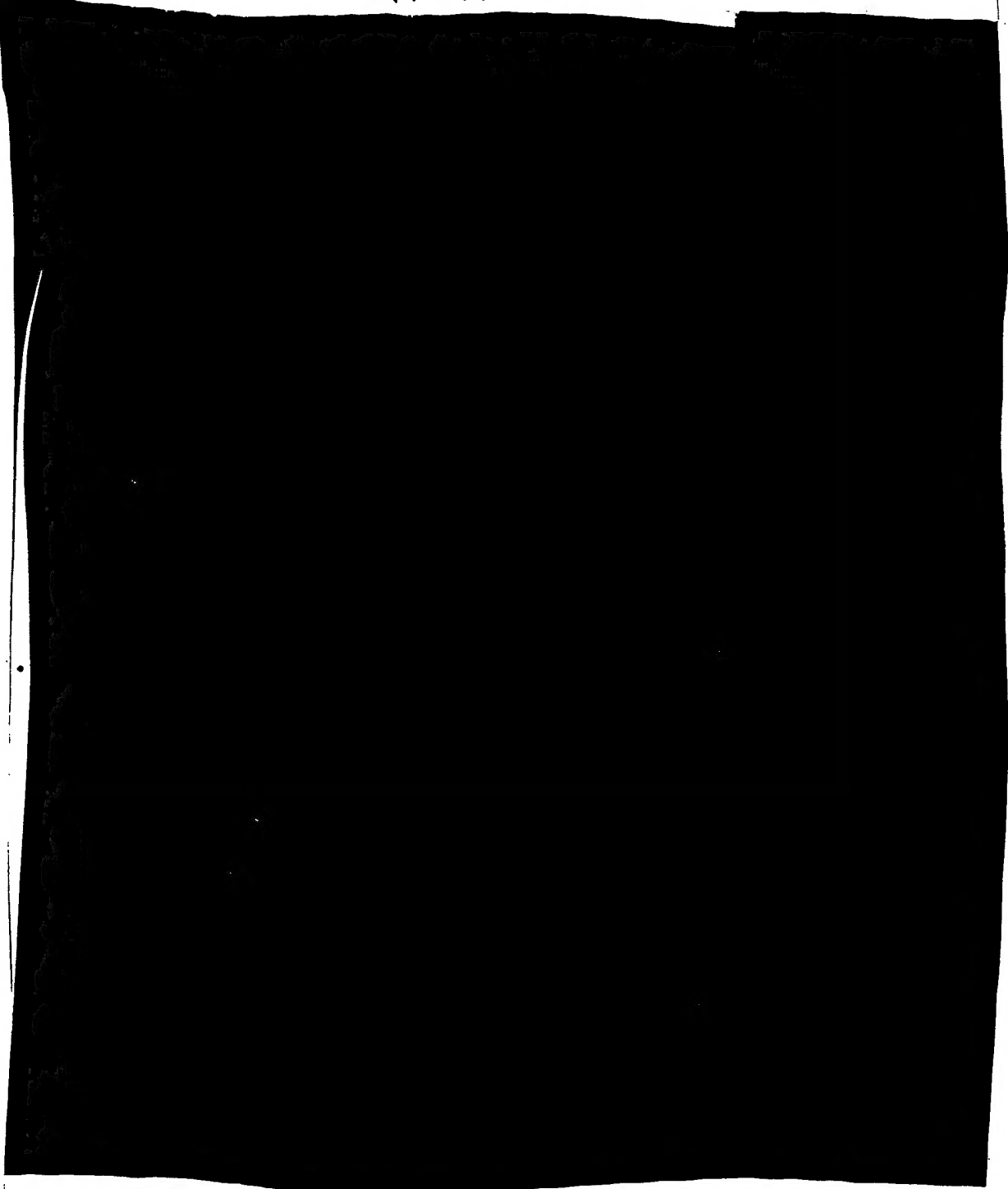
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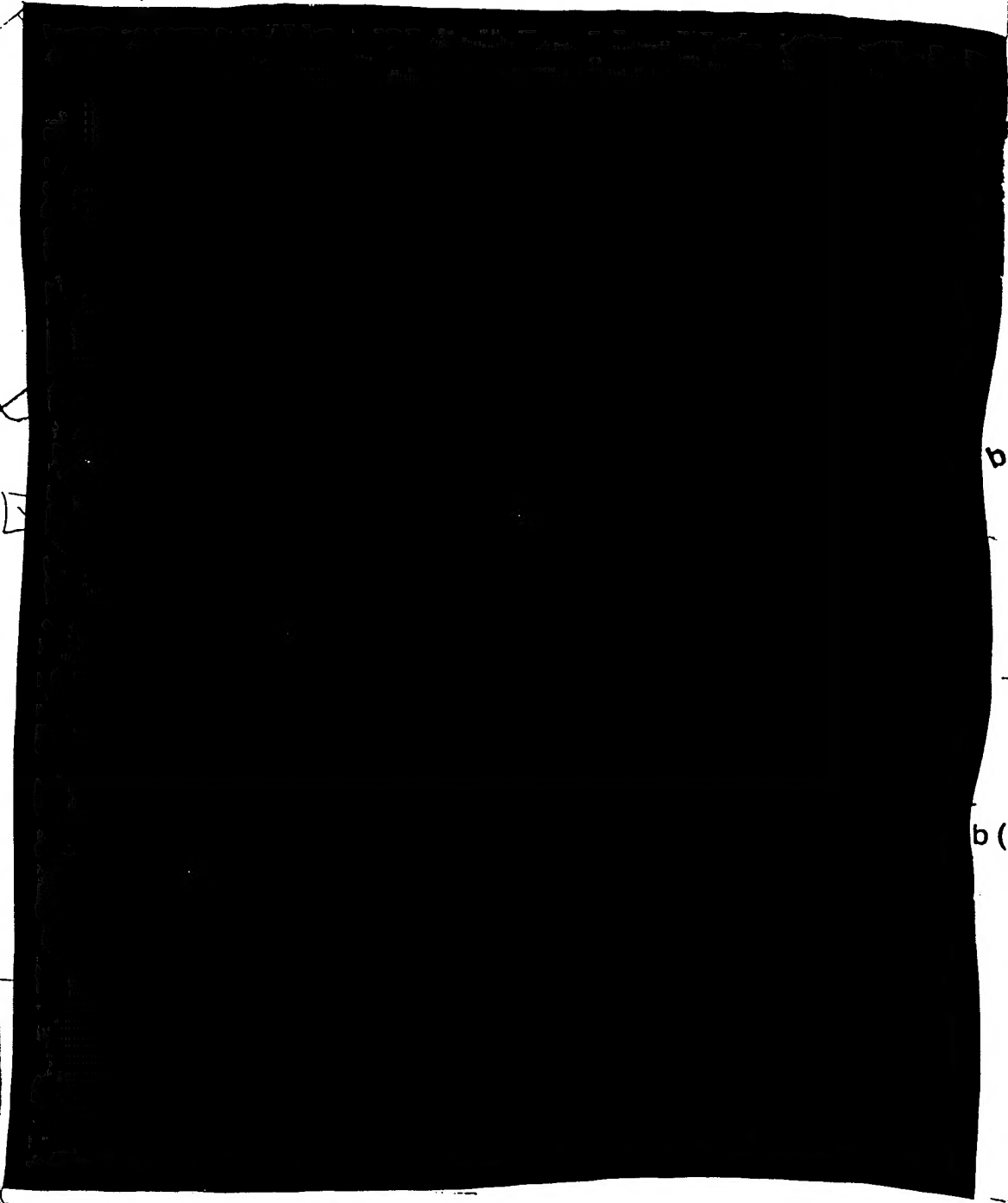
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Outlook for Hawari and His Terrorist Apparatus

Hawari's terrorist apparatus remains a potent threat to US interests.

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The expansion of Hawari's activities into Lebanon may increase the organization's threat potential. Hawari's relationship with Hizballah—a group strongly influenced by Iran—may in the near term result in cooperation on anti-Israeli and anti-Syrian operations staged from Lebanon. A Hawari-Hizballah alliance could have serious long-term implications for terrorism outside the Middle East should the two organizations decide to pool resources and cooperate on terrorist operations worldwide.

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Although the global infrastructure gives the apparatus a wide reach, decentralization has its downside. Not only is it likely that the apparatus's logistics have been impaired by the lack of a central base, but the links between cells also have become more vulnerable to exposure.

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In our judgment, Hawari's strength will continue to depend on his affiliation with Fatah and his personal ties to Arafat. Arafat had considered appointing Hawari to a collective leadership designated to assume the duties of Khalil al-Wazir (Abu Jihad), the PLO number-two man and Western Sector leader assassinated in April 1988. A higher profile, however, would probably minimize Fatah's ability to deny responsibility for his activities. Hawari's Fatah affiliation will continue to make unilateral state action against Hawari politically untenable, particularly for nations that either maintain official diplomatic relations with the PLO or are sympathetic to the Palestinian cause. These credentials apparently will remain the key to Hawari's ability to travel and to establish an operational presence in numerous host states.

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